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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 001144

SIPDIS

NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/13/2019
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SUBJECT: ARRESTED KUWAITI JOURNALIST OUT ON BAIL PENDING
DECEMBER 10 HEARING

REF: KUWAIT 1131

Classified By: PolCouns Pete O'Donohue for reasons 1.4 b and d

11. (U) On December 2, a local misdemeanor court released on a bail of 1,000 dinar (3,500 USD) Kuwaiti journalist and media mogul Mohammad Abdulqader Al-Jasim. Jasim, who was arrested November 22 on charges of slandering the Prime Minister (reftel), earlier refused to pay bail and continued criticizing the PM from his jail cell for stifling freedom of speech. The slander charges against Jasim are scheduled to be heard on December 10.

12. (C) Comment: Based on the provocative comments made by Jasim and his supporters, including MPs, the December 10 hearing -- slated to take place two days after the scheduled interpellation of the PM by members of parliament -- will likely further exacerbate the political tensions between the National Assembly and the ruling Al Sabahs. End Comment.

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